

Tips for Facilitators – Lesson 9

These tips are suggestions based on some ideas and approaches that proved useful and effective for the authors. Each Bible Study group is different. Feel free to use your own approaches as the Lord lays them on your heart.

Times we've shown for the reviews can vary between small groups.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION REVIEW (adds 5-10 minutes to normal lesson time)

NOTE: If you aren't using the part of the Tips for Facilitators that focuses on *Discerning Patterns in Trials* (which began with Lesson 6A), then skip the rest of this section and go into reviewing the read ahead.

- If you are using the *Discerning Patterns in Trials*, start the lesson by asking how everyone did remembering to record trials (heart disturbances) on their FIEL Tool. The goal was to remember to write down at least 2-3 trials from the week.
- Encourage one another, and let participants share patterns they've discerned in their trials from the FIEL Tool, if they are willing.
- Remind the small group that if God's Spirit causes them to remember a past trial during the lesson's discussions, they should write it down on the FIEL Tool before they forget.

REVIEW THE READ AHEAD

- Discuss people's thoughts, insights or observations from the read-ahead.

CONTEXT PART OF THE READ AHEAD:

- Discuss the patterns shown in the read ahead, or save this part until the OBSERVATION 3 part of the lesson using the same method shown in the Lesson 7, 8 Tips for Facilitators.
- CONTEXT additional note:

"In the legal custom of that day a barren woman could give her maid to **her husband** as a **wife**, and the child born of that union was regarded as the first wife's child. If the husband said to the slave-wife's son, "You are my son," then he was the adopted son and heir. So Sarai's suggestion was unobjectionable according to the customs of that time. But God often repudiates social customs."¹

 - o It is easy to dismiss the challenge of Satan's deception against Abram (and even Sarai) when it comes to having a child through Hagar. This is because doing so is not our custom today – and the Bible speaks to this issue later on!
 - o What are some possible customs of our culture that seem right and affect our decision-making in trials? In other words, there are views of life and "how to live"

¹Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:56). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

that are “socially right” in our country. What are some of these customs that could lead us to thinking in certain ways and possibly miss a course of action that God might want us to take? Some examples of “socially acceptable approaches to life” could be (let your group come up with their own):

- God will not “call” parents to serve Him in a way that could cause our kids to not be exposed to normal, healthy kids’ experiences.
- Kids are important and God would not “call” parents to something that would essentially put kids last in the family decision-making.
- Because husbands and wives are equal in God’s sight, the roles of husband/wife are to be equal in decision-making, otherwise one or the other is being mistreated.
- One’s career helps provide for family and God wouldn’t ask us to serve Him in a way that would diminish our career purpose.
- If we aren’t preparing for retirement, then we aren’t responsible, and God’s calling will not hurt us in terms of retiring.

OTHER READ AHEAD DISCUSSION POINTS: (adds 5-10 minutes to 1 hour lesson)

- This Lesson’s Scripture passage points to two of Abram’s trials:
 - Abram passes the first trial (his heir is not to be Eliezer).
 - But, Satan doesn’t stop trying to cause Abram to fall. So, in the second trial, Abram considers yet another way in which he can have descendants.

1. Key Learning Point:

- Can anyone see the key element in Abram’s first trial that is missing from the record of how Abram handled the second trial? Answer: in the second trial Abram does not seek out God. (We see this, however, in the first trial – Genesis 15:2-3.)
- In the other trials we’ve studied, in which did people clearly fail to seek out God?
 - Eve
 - Adam
 - Cain (God sought out Cain, but Cain did not seek out God)
 - Abram and his trial with Pharaoh
- Have people try to recall a recent time when they did not specifically seek out God before making a decision on how to handle a trial (whether the trial was big or little). Write it on the FIEL Tool. (This could add 5 minutes to normal lesson time; 10 minutes if people choose to share and talk about it.)
- BOTTOM LINE: God made a covenant with Abram, but God did not tell Abram specifically that his descendants would come from a child from Sarai. Learning Point: God wants us to seek Him out during each trial we face.

2. Key Learning Point:

- This lesson from Abram’s life shows we cannot rest on our laurels just because we succeed in one trial. Satan is always preparing for another trial to cause us to fall. In the end, we don’t have laurels to rest on anyway. When we are victorious in a trial, it is not due to us, but in following Christ. He gets the credit! Praise God!

3. Key Learning Point:
 - Don't forget the DISCUSSION QUESTION – check out Appendix 3 examples on this (page 186).
 - The DISCUSSION QUESTION shows us how Satan can cause us to take actions as a way to avoid letting someone down, who is close to us. When our hearts are disturbed about how others might act if we say, “No,” then we might feel alone. Those are times to remember God is always with us, and to let that be *real* to us! We must never be afraid to seek God’s specific guidance for each trial.

IDENTIFYING HEART DISTURBANCES (HD)/OBSERVATIONS

- Handle the HDs and 2nd OBSERVATION (the “what do you think God would you have to change in you to be at peace” observation), just like you did for previous lessons.

OBSERVATION 3 (the approach below added about 5-10 minutes to a typical 1 hour lesson)

NOTE: F102 highlights the patterns that can be seen in Abram’s and Sarai’s trials in the read ahead portion of the lessons. If you simply want to follow the F102 lesson plan, then do OBSERVATION 3 as outlined in the book. If you want to bring out more on *Discerning Patterns in Trials*, see how we handled this for Lesson 9 (below).

- Again we discussed BOTH Abram’s and Sarai’s patterns.
 - o After OBSERVATION 2 (Observe what you’d have to change in you to be at peace in the trial), we challenged the group to recall and recap the previous trial(s) for both Abram and Sarai, with the specific goal to see the pattern in Satan’s attacks.
 - o Put 2 columns on the dry erase board – one for Abram’s pattern, one for Sarai’s.
 - o Lesson 9 lists the previous patterns for Abram (page 73). We wrote those on the board under Abram’s name. Then, we sought to identify how Satan could have continued to try to get Abram to follow an old nature pattern based on the two trials in Lesson 9.
 - o We did the same thing with Sarai, even though Lesson 9 doesn’t specifically focus on her perspective. (The next place the book points to the possible pattern in Sarai’s trials is on page 89.) We didn’t actually tell the group to refer to that page; we simply asked questions and assisted the group in discerning those. Sometimes the group came up with other aspects to the pattern, which was not listed in the book. That is fine if it happens in your group – it means people are connecting with the Holy Spirit and discerning more.
 - o When we were done listing a possible temptation for each trial for both Abram and Sarai, we compared the two as a start point to discerning how Satan uses patterns in our own trials.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO WORK ON DURING THE WEEK

- Continue working to remember to list 2-3 trials on your FIEL Tool during the week.
- **HEADS UP!:** If everyone has been putting 2-3 trials/week on their FIEL Tool, then by the next lesson they should have at least 8 or so trials recorded. This will be important! The Lesson 10 Tips for Facilitators includes an exercise to further assist in discerning spiritual patterns contained within trials.
- During the week, each participant should try to identify a trial or pattern that they would be willing to share with the small group.

FACILITATOR PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT LESSON (LESSON 10)

- The AUDIO page on the *Keys* website has a Handout that will go with Lesson 10: “Questions for Discerning Old Self Patterns in Trials.”
- Download the Handout yourself or just make sure your small group participants will have it for Lesson 10.
- You can make the Handout part of the read ahead assignment for Lesson 10, or you can simply introduce it and hand it out at Lesson 10. You can let the small group talk about it after you introduce it, and then let folks use it and think about it prior to Lesson 11. How you choose to do this is up to you.